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**BECKLEY MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON ON FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES**

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Marland Willis, 45, of Beckley, was sentenced to 166 months in prison on Thursday in federal court by United States District Judge Thomas E. Johnston. Willis received 151 months in prison for possession with intent to distribute five grams or more of cocaine base, a charge to which he pleaded guilty to in May 2010. Judge Johnston also sentenced the defendant to 15 months in prison for violating the terms of his supervised release on a previous drug conviction, and ordered that the sentences run consecutively.

Willis admitted that on June 17, 2009, when West Virginia State Troopers responded to a complaint at a residence near Oak Hill, they patted him down and found a bag in his pocket which contained 15.65 grams of cocaine base. Willis admitted that he had obtained the drugs for a person in the residence and that he intended to distribute the drugs to that person. Willis also admitted involvement with approximately 18 additional grams of cocaine base.

Willis was convicted in federal court in Beckley in 2003 of aiding and abetting the distribution of a controlled substance. He was sentenced to 54 months in prison on that charge. When Willis possessed the cocaine base on June 17, 2009, he was still on supervised release for the 2003 conviction.

The West Virginia State Police investigated the case and Assistant United States Attorney John File handled the prosecution.

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